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Milken Family Foundation Surprises Barre Teacher with \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

***Governor Peter Shumlin presented Vermont's "Oscar of Teaching"
to Katie Sedore from Spaulding High School***

BARRE, VT — All of Spaulding High School in Barre, Vermont was abuzz with excitement as they prepared for a special assembly featuring more than a dozen special guests including Governor Peter Shumlin, Vermont's Secretary of Education Rebecca Holcombe, former Secretary of Education Armando Vilaseca and Barre Mayor Thom Lauzon. Yet only a handful of people – and not even the school principal – knew that one of the outstanding teachers at Spaulding was about to receive the surprise of a lifetime.

Cheers rang out when Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president, Milken Educator Awards, and Governor Shumlin announced the name of Katie Sedore as Vermont's 2013-14 Milken Educator Award winner. The honor, one of education's most prestigious recognitions, comes with an unrestricted cash prize of \$25,000. In front of students, peers and her father, who is the high school's principal, this exceptional educator was heralded with a fanfare typically reserved for stellar performances by athletes and entertainers.

The recognition is not a lifetime achievement award. Recipients are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved... and for the promise of what they will accomplish. Encompassed in the recognition is the responsibility for those honored to stretch their professional practices and leadership to even higher levels. "Our public education system is at the heart of America's promise and essential to safeguarding the American dream for future generations," said Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation. "With research confirming that effective teachers represent the single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement, it is important to honor them, learn from them, and inspire more capable people to enter the profession. As the program's motto extols, *the future belongs to the educated.*"

Described as a natural educator, Katie Sedore is a young teacher who carries herself with the bearing of a seasoned veteran, a characteristic that accounts for her success with all students, including those who face the greatest challenges. Ninth-grade language arts students at Spaulding High School in Barre, Vermont, often enter her class several grade levels behind only to find that they are held to the same

academic and behavioral standards as other students. With Sedore on their side setting clear, consistent standards— and treating them with unaccustomed respect—they find themselves in an environment in which they can—and do—learn. Rarely is a student sent from her class for behavioral problems.

In the classroom, Sedore implements a multi-tiered approach of differentiated instruction and academic involvement. Her classes are designed for student engagement, such as her persuasive speech class on the subject of violence and the media which culminated in a live debate with guest judges. Sedore is a major player on the school's literacy team, developing its curriculum. In addition, she spearheaded a new reading intervention course to help students catch up or progress at grade level. Taking literacy efforts to a new arena, she sought out physical education teachers to promote the teaching of sports literature.

Sedore runs the after-school Homework Club, as well as teaches at the Granite Academy—an alternative program started by Spaulding High's special education department. Colleagues observe that gains made by students who are often most resistant to learning amount to nothing short of a transformation in the classroom. Vermont NECAP scores for her students showed marked growth.

Coming from a family of educators, Sedore understands the importance of pursuing excellence beyond the classroom and has contributed significantly to the school's professional standing. She heads up the Spaulding Educational Support Team (EST) and co-chaired the school's recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) recertification process. She is an active member of the current Spaulding Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) team. In pursuit of her passion for literacy, Sedore is following up her master's degree with further graduate work to become a much-needed reading specialist.

The Awards story doesn't end with the surprise notification. New recipients are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators coast-to-coast whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

Since first presented to a dozen California teachers, the program has grown to become the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program having honored nearly 2,600 K-12 teachers, principals and specialists. More than \$136 million in funding, including over \$64 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the overall program, which includes powerful professional development opportunities throughout recipients' careers. From local to state to national and even international levels, the exponential impact of Milken Educators strengthens American K-12 education.

Alternating yearly between elementary and secondary educators, the Awards are sourced through each participating state department of education, which appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to confidentially review candidates for recommendation to the Foundation.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, visit www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org or call the Foundation at (310) 570-4775. Follow the Awards at www.twitter.com/milken, www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards and at www.youtube.com/milkenaward.

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Education reform leader Lowell Milken created the Milken Educator Awards to recognize exemplary teachers and established the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to generate more talented teachers, www.niet.org. NIET operates TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement and the Best Practices Center. Lowell Milken recently provided the founding gift for the UCLA School of Law's Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy. For more information about Lowell visit www.lowellmilken.com.